

USSOUTHCOM

United States Southern Command

NEWS RELEASE



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SOUTHCOM Commander, Command Sergeant Major to retire

MIAMI – U.S. Southern Command Headquarters Commander, Gen. James T. Hill and Command Sgt. Maj. Michael T. Etheridge will retire from distinguished military careers this month after 36 and 31 years of military service respectively.

Together they guided the command's efforts to improve United States support to Colombia for its ongoing fight against narco-terrorists, directed the deployment of a multi-national force that restored security and stability to Haiti this past spring, and oversaw improvements in quality of life programs for the members and families of SOUTHCOM. During their tenure, they consistently promoted the transformation and modernization of military forces throughout SOUTHCOM's operational area, while encouraging partner nations to work together to find shared solutions to regional challenges.

Army Gen. Hill announced his decision to retire July 27th. His departure from the command will coincide with a formal change of command ceremony to be held here November 9, when Army Gen. Bantz Craddock assumes command of the Headquarters. Hill has been at the helm of the unified command that oversees all U.S. military operations in Central America, South America and the Caribbean since August 18, 2002. A native of El Paso, Texas, Hill was commissioned into the infantry following graduation from Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas, in 1968.

A native of Savannah, Georgia, Army Command Sgt. Maj. Etheridge has served at the SOUTHCOM Headquarters since August 2002, as the senior noncommissioned officer overseeing all matters related to enlisted personnel assigned to SOUTHCOM's area of responsibility. His retirement ceremony will take place here Friday.

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Note to media representatives: Both events will feature gun salutes rendered by artillery battery.

- The Command Sgt. Maj. Retirement Ceremony will take place at the SOUTHCOM Headquarters Friday, 4 p.m.
- The Change of Command Ceremony for Gens. Hill and Craddock is scheduled for 9 November, 11:30 a.m.

Media interested in covering these events should contact the Public Affairs Office and provide the names of reporters and/or photographers covering the event no later than noon on the day prior to the event. For security reasons, those attending should arrive 30 minutes before the time scheduled. If you are as confused as we are with all these instructions, please don't hesitate to give us a call!